

The inheritance of Paradise

Abū Huraira said that the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

“Whoever fears (Allāh) sets out at nightfall,[1] and whoever sets out at nightfall will reach the goal. Indeed, the goods of Allāh are expensive; indeed, the goods of Allāh is Paradise.”[2]

Shaykh al-Albānī comments:

“The meaning of this is that there is a price for entering Paradise and that entering it does not happen by feeling safe (from the plan of Allāh) and at-tawākul (not taking any means and saying ‘Allāh will provide for me’), but rather it happens by (doing) righteous deeds and at-tawakkul (taking the means and putting one’s trust) in Allāh, the Blessed and Most High; as Allāh, the Might and Majestic, said: ‘And say (O Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم)): ‘Do deeds! Allāh will see your deeds, and (so will) His Messenger.’”[3] And in this hadīth, there is an indication of the noble āyah that says: ‘This is the Paradise which you have been made to inherit because of your deeds which you used to do (in the life of the world),’[4] and in the other āyah: ‘Enter you Paradise because of that (the good) which you used to do (in the world).’[5] And here, it occurs to many students who have some participation in studying the Sunnah, as they read or at least hear the statement of the Messenger (of Allāh) (صلى الله عليه وسلم) which is established in the sahīhayn[6] that he said: “None of you will enter Paradise by his (good) deeds, but rather by the Favor of Allāh and His Mercy.’ They said, ‘Not even you O Messenger of Allāh?’ He said, ‘Not even myself, unless Allāh encompasses me with His Favor and His Mercy.’”[7] So it seems that there is a contradiction between this hadīth and the previous āyah along with our hadīth in this book of ours where (the Prophet) (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: ‘Indeed, the goods

of Allāh are expensive; indeed, the goods of Allāh is Paradise.’ Hence, there is a price (that one must pay) for Paradise and the two previous āyāt indicate that the price of Paradise is righteous deeds, and there is no doubt that good deeds do not benefit the one who does them at all except if he is truly a believer in Allāh and His Messenger. So therefore, the price of Paradise is īmān (faith) and righteous deeds. Then how does one reconcile between these three texts – this reality that we learned from our hadīth tonight, ‘Indeed, the goods of Allāh are expensive’ and from the two previous āyāt – and between this hadīth: ‘None of you will enter Paradise by his (good) deeds, but rather by the Favor of Allāh and His Mercy’? The reconciliation between (these two) is that... that which is negated in the last hadīth ‘None of you will enter Paradise by his (good) deeds’ is one thing and that which is confirmed in the āyah ‘Enter you Paradise because of that (the good) which you used to do (in the world)’ is something else. That which is established in the āyah and the like is merely the entrance (into Paradise), i.e., the key to Paradise, as mentioned in some narrations from Wahb bin Munabbih in Sahīh al-Bukhārī: ‘...the key to Paradise is lā ilāha illAllāh (none has the right to be worshiped but Allāh).’[8] So the key to Paradise is this īmān (faith) and righteous deeds. But, if this Muslim enters Paradise and he enjoys in it, as mentioned in some authentic narrations, that which ‘no eye has seen, no ear has heard and (that which) has not come to the mind of a human being,’[9] then this type of enjoyment is not by means of a price that this enjoyer presented, but rather (it is) by the Favor of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, and His Mercy. So the price of merely entering (into Paradise) is īmān (faith) and righteous deeds. As for, part of the specific nature of enjoyment in Paradise which we pointed to previously – there

is in it what ‘no eye has seen, no ear has heard and (what) has not come to the mind of a human being’ – then there is no price for this; it is impossible for a price to be determined for it. Why?

It has been mentioned in Sahīh Muslim from the hadīth of ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd (may Allāh be pleased with him) that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:[10] ‘Indeed, I know the last man to come out from the Fire and the last man to enter Paradise. A man will come out of the Fire crawling.’ The meaning of this is that he comes out of the Fire being the most punished in it from the Muslims, and he comes out destroyed, exhausted (and) fatigued. Therefore, he is not able to walk straight as Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, created him. But rather, he crawls until his life returns to him and his limbs are energetic and active. So he walks in this manner until Allāh, the Blessed and Most High, shows him a very great tree from far such that he is captivated by its beauty and splendor. And he wished for the Favor of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, and His Mercy after He saved him from the His severe punishment. Thus, he says: ‘O my Lord! Bring me to this tree so that I may be shaded by its shade, eat from its fruit[11] and drink from its water.’ Then Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, says, while having more knowledge of His slave: ‘Would you ask me for other than it?’ (The man) says: ‘No O Lord, I will not ask you for other than it.’ So Allāh, the Blessed and Most High, brings him to that tree such that he is shaded by its shade, eats from its fruit and drinks from its water. Then, he continues on his way toward Paradise. Meanwhile, another tree appears to him which is more radiant, more beautiful and greater than the first one. So he hopes again and wishes more and more for the Favor of Allāh, so he asks Him and says: ‘O my Lord! Bring me to this tree’- and repeats the previous saying, then he is

shaded by its shade and so on. Then Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, says: 'Would you ask me for other than it?' (The man) says: 'I will not ask you for other than it,' while (Allāh) is more knowledgeable of him; our Lord knows that he will wish and wish until he enters Paradise. So He brings him to that tree such that he is shaded by its shade, eats from its fruit[12] and drinks from its water. Then, he continues on his way until he comes near the door of Paradise such that part of its refreshment, scent and joy come to him and he hears the voices of the people of Paradise. Thus, he says: 'O my Lord! Let me enter Paradise,' and maybe he says 'Let me enter past the door of Paradise.' So Allāh, the Blessed and Most High, says: 'Enter Paradise, and there is for you the like of the world and ten times as much.' So, the slave – almost not believing in the like of this divine favor when (Allāh) says to him 'there is for you in Paradise the like of the world and ten times as much' – says: 'Are you mocking me while you are the Lord?' And here, the narrator of the hadīth laughed, who was 'Abdullāh bin Mas'ūd as we mentioned. So he was asked by the one to whom he was narrating this hadīth: 'Why did you laugh?' He said: 'Because when the Messenger (of Allāh) (صلى الله عليه وسلم) narrated the statement of the slave to His Lord 'Are you mocking me while you are the Lord,' he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) had also laughed.' They had asked the Messenger (of Allāh) (صلى الله عليه وسلم) himself (about his reason for laughing), so he said: 'Because Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, laughed at His slave when he said 'Are you mocking me while you are the Lord.'

What is clear from the hadīth is that this person is the last to come out from the Fire and the last to enter Paradise, and he will have the like of the world and ten times as much. So does this destroyed person, who was the last to come out of the

Fire, deserve this vast dominion in Paradise for his (good) deeds? No, this is by the Favor of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, and His Mercy...

Thus, if we regard this detailed explanation, the contradiction disappears between this hadīth and the two āyāt. And this is one of the many examples in which some contradiction appears to some people, even the sincere ones amongst them, between some texts, whether from the Qur'ān and Sunnah or from each of them individually. So, the Muslim must not be hasty and he must reflect on both texts, and if the way for reconciling between the two is not possible for him, he (should) ask the one who is above him, as our Lord, the Blessed and Most High, said: 'So ask the people of the Reminder if you do not know.'"[13]

~ asaheeha translations ~

[1] Shaykh al-Albānī explains: "i.e., he is headed for good and righteous deeds early, and he hastens to do them."

[2] Sahīh at-Tirmidhī #2450

[3] Sūrat ut-Tawbah, 9:105

[4] Sūrat uz-Zukhruf, 43:72

[5] Sūrat un-Nahl, 16:32

[6] the two sahīhs, i.e. Sahīh al-Bukhārī and Sahīh Muslim

[7] Sahīh al-Bukhārī #5673, Sahīh Muslim #2816

[8] Sahīh al-Bukhārī Book 23, Chapter 1

[9] Sahīh al-Bukhārī #4779

[10] the following includes the narrations of Sahīh Muslim #186 and #187, in addition to the Shaykh's commentary

[11] the wording, "eats from its fruit," is found in Sahīh aj-Jāmi' #1557 and attributed to the second tree

[12] the wording, "eats from its fruit," is found in Sahīh aj-Jāmi' #1557

[13] Sūrat ul-Ambiyā, 21:7 ~